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MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT APPROVES EARLY WORK FOR NEW SIOUX LOOKOUT HEALTH CENTRE

Investing \$1.49 Million To Start Work On New Centre Of Excellence

SIOUX LOOKOUT – The McGuinty government is investing \$1.49 million to proceed with the first stage of construction of the new Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre, Michael Gravelle, the MPP for Thunder Bay-Superior North, announced today on behalf of Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman.

“Our government is working to make sure that communities across Northern Ontario have access to the best health care available. That’s why we are investing in the development of the new Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre,” Gravelle said. “This new facility, which has been designated as a Centre of Excellence, will provide culturally sensitive health care services across Northwestern Ontario.”

The McGuinty government is investing \$1.49 million toward site clearing, site services and road work as part of this initial work leading to the construction of the new Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre expected to commence this fall. The centre has been given approval to tender a contract for this preliminary construction work.

The new health centre will be a 60-bed facility that includes 47 acute care beds, eight complex continuing care beds and five substance abuse withdrawal management beds.

“We’re delighted to be moving forward on the new Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre,” Smitherman said. “This much needed, state-of-the-art hospital will improve access to quality health care for the residents of Sioux Lookout and its northern communities.”

The commitment to build a new hospital is based on the Four Party Hospital Services Agreement signed by the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, the Ontario government, the federal government and the Town of Sioux Lookout.

Other initiatives by the McGuinty government benefiting the health of Ontarians include:

- Increasing operating funding to provincial hospitals to \$12.9 billion in 2006/07, growing to \$14 billion in 2008/09
- Reducing wait times for five key health care services (hip and knee joint replacement, cataract surgeries, MRI exams, cancer surgeries and cardiac procedures) with a recent investment of \$222.5 million
- Increasing medical school enrollment by 23 percent and funding long-term care homes to hire 1100 new nurses.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities - keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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Media Contacts:

David Spencer
Minister's Office
416-327-4320

A.G. Klei
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 1-866-532-3161

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